



THE 18/19 SEASON
THE HEIGHTS OF IMAGINATION

Department of Theatre and Dance

Wedding Band

A Love/Hate Story in Black and White

by Alice Childress



November 8–11, 2018

Alexander Kasser Theater

**Large
Print**



**MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Dr. Susan A. Cole, President
Daniel Gurskis, Dean, College of the Arts
Jedediah Wheeler, Executive Director, Arts + Cultural Programming

Department of Theatre and Dance
Randy Mugleston, Chair

Wedding Band

A Love/Hate Story in Black and White

by Alice Childress

Director **Heather Benton**
Dramaturg **Marian Palmer**
Musical Director **Jarred Lee**
Choreographer **Beatrice Capote**
Intimacy Coaches/Fight Choreographers **Rick Sordelet, Collin Kelly-Sordelet**
Dialect Coach **Jacqueline Springfield**
Scenic Designer **Christopher Erbe**
Costume Designer **Amanda Lee**
Lighting Designer **Cameron Filepas**
Sound Designer **Nathanael Brown**
Hair/Makeup Designer **Jasmin Smith**
Production Stage Manager **Adriana Guerrero**
Directing Contributor **Tia James**

Cast (in order of appearance)

Julia Augustine	Kira Player
Teeta.....	Ciara Allen
Mattie	Alexis Key
Lula Green.....	Linda Nenonene
Fanny Johnson	Brittany Peterson
Nelson Green.....	Bradley Satchell

The Bell Man **Alex Reitter,* Cameron Style****
 Princess **Templar Grace Wright**
 Herman **Dalton Mitchell**
 Annabelle **Kristen Oswald,* Isabel Lagana****
 Merilee Jones **Raven Smith**
 Walter **Cameron Style,* Alex Reitter****
 Frieda, Herman's Mother **Molly Billman**
 Female Understudy **Raven Smith**

*11/8, 11/10 (eve.) **11/9, 11/10 (mat.), 11/11

Wedding Band is presented by special arrangement by Samuel French, Inc.,
 235 Park Avenue South, Fifth Floor, New York, NY 10003.

Special Thanks: TDF Costume Collection, Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers
 University, The Shakespeare Theatre of NJ, Kaufman's Army Navy NYC.

Duration: 2 hours 15 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission.

In consideration of both audiences and performers, please turn off all electronic
 devices. The taking of photographs or videos and the use of recording equipment
 are not permitted. No food or drink is permitted in the theater.

Time and Place

1918, South Carolina, USA

Act I

Scene 1: Saturday morning

Scene 2: That evening

Act II

Scene 1: Sunday morning

Scene 2: Early afternoon the following day

Program Notes

“I deal with the people I know best, which are ordinary people. . . I write about the intellectual poor. People who are thoughtful about their condition, people who are limited in many ways, that have been cut off from having all that they want and desire, and know that this has happened to them.”

—*Alice Childress*

“What you don’t say, you swallow down.” South Carolina, 1918: In the wake of World War I, amidst a raging influenza epidemic, two star-crossed lovers (Julia, a black seamstress and Herman, a white baker) seek marriage deep in the Jim Crow South, where interracial marriage is forbidden. In this “love/hate story in black and white,” Herman’s family and Julia’s neighbors collide and no one seems to escape the influence of systemic racism. Will Julia and Herman’s love for one another withstand unearthing the brutal truth? This seldom-revived play by a too-little-known female African-American playwright has never felt more relevant than right now. Alice Childress has crafted beautifully complex characters with humor, immediacy, and pathos and brings the unspoken truth to the surface, demanding conversation.

Wedding Band was written in 1963, and although the show was optioned seven times for Broadway, producers told the playwright that the play was too “ahead of its time—too sensitive and risky for the Broadway audiences of the era.” Childress was unwilling to soften the play’s controversial themes, and *Wedding Band* never received a Broadway run. The play received a production at the University of Michigan in 1966 but did not receive a full professional production until 1972, Off-Broadway at the New York Shakespeare Festival, where it was codirected by Alice Childress and Joseph Papp and starred Ruby Dee. With this production, Childress became one of the first African-American women to direct an Off-Broadway play. She is also noted as the first woman playwright to win an Obie award (*Trouble in Mind*, 1956).

We are thrilled to be offering *Wedding Band* in our 2018/19 season in the Department of Theatre and Dance as it has provided us with an opportunity to grapple with the difficulties of our country’s past, to speak what we so often

“swallow down,” to listen with empathy, to collaborate in ways that honor diverse points of view, and to offer our population of acting students, especially our students of color, opportunities to work on roles that were written for them. We are excited to offer this provocative play to the MSU community and hope that our production will encourage deeper listening and conversation surrounding the themes of the play.

—Heather Benton, Director

Production Biographies

Heather Benton (Director) is an actor/director who specializes in integrated approaches to actor training and physical theater. She has created and/or performed original and devised work in New York City for the undergroundzero festival, East River Commedia, Theatre Trouve, Montana Repertory Theatre, Kenyon College, the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, and MSU. Directing credits include *La Chunga*, a site-specific production at the Nuyorican Café, Indigo Playground, New York; and *Emma*, *Ring Round the Moon*, *The Trojan Women*, and *Water Children* at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. At MSU she directed *Iphigenia at Aulis* by Euripides at the Alexander Kasser Theater (2016) and *Wintertime* by Chuck Mee at the L. Howard Fox Theatre (2014). Benton is a member of Actors' Equity and chair of devised theater for Region 2 of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival. She holds an MFA in Acting from American Repertory Theater/Moscow Art Theater at Harvard University. Benton is the program coordinator for the BFA Acting program in the Department of Theatre and Dance at MSU and an assistant professor.

Marian Palmer (Dramaturg) is a junior in the Theatre Studies program. Her aspirations include acting, writing, and producing for theater, film, and television. She has worked on sets for productions for a few years, most recently on *Anything Goes* at MSU.

Jarred Lee (Music Director) is a New York City–based musical director and vocal coach. Associate keyboard programmer credits include Broadway: *Something Rotten*, *American Psycho*, and *On the Twentieth Century*; Off-Broadway:

Brooklyn Night; and National Tour: *Hello, Dolly!* Lee is currently an accompanist for the John J. Cali School of Music at MSU.

Beatrice Capote (Choreographer) is a Cuban-American professional contemporary dancer. She trained at Alvin Ailey American Dance Center and has traveled all over the world with prestigious choreographers/companies such as Matthew Rushing; INSPIRIT, a dance company; Areytos Performance Works; and Kyle Abraham/Abraham.In.Motion. She is a member of Camille A. Brown and Dancers. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and Montclair State University with a BA in Dance Education and an MFA in Dance. She studied with masters of Danza Contemporanea de Cuba and Yesenia F. Selier. She is faculty at Alvin Ailey American Dance Center, Joffrey Ballet School, and MSU. With her contemporary background/Cuban roots, she utilizes both genres to navigate through storytelling and history. www.beatricecapote.com

Rick Sordelet (Intimacy Coach/Fight Choreographer) and his son, Christian Kelly-Sordelet, are the creators of Sordelet, Inc., an exciting new stage combat company bringing more than 30 years of action movement experience to the entertainment community. Sordelet has worked on 72 Broadway productions, including Disney's *The Lion King* and Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, as well as the national tours of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* and *Les Misérables*. His credits include 52 first-class productions worldwide. Opera credits include *Cyrano* (starring Placido Domingo) at the Metropolitan Opera, *Don Carlo* (directed by Nicholas Hytner) and *Heart of the Soldier* at San Francisco Opera, and *Cold Mountain*, *Don Giovanni*, *Roméo et Juliette*, and *La Fanciulla del West* at Santa Fe Opera. He has worked on films such as *The Game Plan*, *Dan in Real Life*, *Brave New Jersey*, and *The Sounding*. On television, he and his son worked as stunt coordinators for the hit CBS comedy series *Kevin Can Wait* and spent 12 years as stunt coordinators for *Guiding Light*. He is an instructor at the Yale School of Drama and a board member for the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Sordelet received the Edith Oliver Award for Sustained Excellence at the Lucille Lortel Awards from the League of Off-Broadway Theatres and Producers, and a Jeff Award for Best Fight Direction for *Romeo and Juliet* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. He is the author of the play *Buried Treasure* and the cowriter of the upcoming feature film *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, directed by Bryan Singer. www.sordeletink.com

Jacqueline Springfield (Dialect Coach) is a professional actor and a teacher of voice/speech and acting. Her teaching credits include New York Film Academy, Brooklyn College, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Metro Theater Company, Nashville Shakespeare Festival, Shades of Black Theatre Festival, and the American College Theater Festival. She holds a master of fine arts degree in Acting from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and is a certified associate instructor of Fitzmaurice Voicework. Springfield currently teaches voice and speech at American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City and she continues to work as a performer in film, television, theater, and voiceover.

Christopher Erbe (Scenic Designer) is senior at MSU majoring in Theatre Production/Design. His other credits include *Company* (Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival award winner) and *Anything Goes* (assistant). New York City credits include *Proverbs 11:29* (New York Theater Festival). He also did projections for *A Late Morning (in America) with Ronald Reagan* (Contemporary American Theater Festival). @small_world_design | smallworldscenicdesign.com

Amanda Lee (Costume Designer) is a senior at MSU pursuing a BFA in Costume Design and Technology. Design credits include *Daughter of Ruin* (Kings Mountain Productions), *Twelfth Night* (MSU), the premiere of Larry Keigwin's "Mad Rush" (MSU), and *Seussical* (New London Barn Playhouse). Additional credits include assistant design for *AIDA* (MSU), *Anything Goes* (MSU), and *Porgy and Bess* (Utah Festival Opera). She has recently worked as the intern for the US costume design team of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, interned for the design team of the *Ain't Too Proud* National Tour, and stitches for Lynne Baccus NYC.

Cameron Filepas (Lighting Designer) is a junior at MSU majoring in Theatre Production/Design with a concentration in lighting design. He has previously designed *Punk Rock*, *Company*, and *Mad Forest* as well as assisted both student and professional designers on productions including *Works-a-Foot 2015*, *Danceworks 2016*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and *Michigan Murders* at MSU. Other credits include assistant master electrician on *Carrie: The Musical* and master electrician on *Anything Goes*. Filepas currently is the resident lighting designer for Hopewell Valley Children's Theatre and has previously designed at the Strawberry One-Act Festival in the Theatre at St. Clement's and worked at the Ohio Light Opera as

the assistant lighting designer this past summer. Upcoming designs include *Guys and Dolls* in the Alexander Kasser Theater.

Nathanael Brown (Sound Designer) is a junior at MSU and has worked on a multitude of plays and musicals in and outside the university. Credits include the fall 2017/spring 2018 dance shows as the sound designer, the Plays in the Parks 2017 and 2018 seasons as the audio engineer, and a plethora of other shows. He is currently designing *A House on Haunted Hill* at the Metuchen Forum Theatre.

Jasmin Smith (Hair/Makeup Designer) is a senior at Montclair State studying in the BFA program for costume, hair, and makeup design. Smith has worked on numerous shows at the university including *Twelfth Night*, *In the Red and Brown Water*, Kathleen Kelley's "Simulacra," Fredrick Earl Mosley's "Journey Men," and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Other assistant designs include *West Side Story*, *AIDA*, *Punk Rock*, and *The Producers*. Currently, Smith is completing the Bobbi Brown Program in Makeup Artistry.

Adriana Guerrero (Production Stage Manager) is senior at MSU pursuing a BFA in Theatre Production/Design with a concentration in stage management. Some of her management credits at MSU include *Company*, *A White House Cantata*, *Theatre for Community Impact: The Orange Project*, and *Ami Brabson: Phenomenal Woman*. Other MSU credits include assistant house manager (Alexander Kasser Theater), *AIDA* (run crew), and *Anything Goes* (wardrobe).

Cast Biographies

Ciara Allen (Teeta) is a freshman in the BFA Theatre Department in her second year at MSU. Two of her most recent credits are *The Jury Room* by C. B. Gilford, where she played the Society Woman, as well as performing two pieces in the *The Vagina Monologues* by Eve Ensler. Allen has been acting since the age of seven and has always been passionate about theater. Her goal is to become a world-renowned film actress and inspire children to follow their passions, no matter how daring.

Molly Billman (Frieda) is a senior BFA Acting major originally from California who moved to the East Coast to continue her acting training. She spent a year at the New York Conservatory for Dramatic Arts before finishing her college career at MSU. At MSU she has starred in *Misalliance* as Mrs. Tarleton, *Anything Goes* as Mrs. Hartcourt, as well as *The Scarlett Pimpernel* as Margeruite, *A Little Night Music* as Desiree, *Sweeney Todd* as Mrs. Lovett (FCOP), *Into the Woods* as The Witch (CCPA), and Ariel in *Footloose* (SCRT).

Alexis Key (Mattie) is a freshman BFA Acting major. Last year she played Nia in the play *In the Red and Brown Water* directed by Debbie Saivetz. She graduated from Spring Valley High School in 2017, where her most recognizable credits were playing Maria in *West Side Story* and Amneris in *AIDA*.

Isabel Lagana (Annabelle) is in her second year of the BFA Acting program. Additional MSU credits include *In the Red and Brown Water* as an assistant director and *Theatre on the Move* as an ensemble member.

Dalton Mitchell (Herman) is a senior acting major at MSU. Over the last four years he has been a part of MSU productions including *Misalliance* and *Matsukaze*, and he was last seen on the Alexander Kasser stage in *Iphigenia at Aulis* in 2016.

Linda Nenonene (Lula Green) is a sophomore BFA Acting major. Previous credits include *Aida (AIDA)*, *Jesus (Godspell)*, *Dominique (Lucky Stiff)*, *Van's Sister (Dog Sees God)*, and *Mama Moja/The Woman Who Reminds You (In the Red and Brown Water)*.

Kristen Oswald (Annabelle) is a senior BFA Acting major. Her past performances at MSU include the *Breaking the Cycle* tour and *Matsukaze*. Past roles include Corin in *As You Like It*, Claude in *Not Not Not Not Not Enough Oxygen* by Carol Churchill, and *I'm Trying to Tell You Something Important* Soundpainting Performance, all at New York Stage and Film: Powerhouse Theatre Training Program.

Brittany Peterson (Fanny) is a senior Child Advocacy major with minors in Social Work and Theatre. She got her start in acting by playing the spunky character Missy in *Aliens vs. Cheerleaders* in her junior year of high school. After that experience Peterson knew right then that that was what she wanted to do with her life.

Kira Player (Julia Augustine) is finishing out her last year as an MSU BFA Acting major with this play. Past credits include *Civics and Humanities for Non-Majors* (Dar), *Punk Rock* (Tanya), *JON* (Kimberly), and *99 Ways to F*%k a Swan* (Lucrezia).

Alex Reitter (The Bell Man/Walter) is a BFA Acting major in his junior year at MSU. Reitter is from Hamilton, NJ, and graduated from Robbinsville High School. He has starred in a few productions at MSU such as *Twelfth Night* and Theatre on the Move: Bully Tour.

Bradley Satchell (Nelson Green) is a junior Acting major from Port Saint Lucie, FL. During his sophomore year he was in *Twelfth Night* and *In the Red and Brown Water*. He received training from the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York, the Rutgers Summer Acting Conservatory in New Brunswick, and the Jersey City Arts High School Theatre program. (IG: bradsatch)

Raven Smith (Merilee Jones/Female Understudy) is a junior BFA Acting major at MSU. Previous credits include *Twelfth Night*. Upcoming credits include *Daughters of the Rebellion*.

Cameron Style (Walter/The Bell Man) is a junior BFA Acting major who has recently appeared in *Twelfth Night* as Fabian, *Mad Forest* as Radu, and *The Brief Tragedy of the Flesh* as Christopher.

Templar Grace Wright (Princess) is making her mainstage debut in this important show. Wright is a current BFA Acting major and ASL minor as well as a recent graduate of the American Musical Theatre Academy of New York and London. Her past credits include *Spring Awakening* (Wendla), *Les Misérables* (Eponine), and *The Miracle Worker* (Helen Keller).

Staff

Office of Arts + Cultural Programming

Executive Director **Jedediah Wheeler**

Executive Producer **Jill Dombrowski**

Business Manager **Stephanie Haggerstone**

Production/Facility Manager **J. Ryan Graves**

Cultural Engagement Director **Eveline Chang-Fritsch**

Director of Audience Services **Robert Hermida**

Technical Director **Colin Van Horn**

Master Stage Electrician **Andrew R. Wilsey**

Box Office Manager **Jeff Lambert Wingfield**

House Manager **Maureen Grimaldi**

Graphics **Patrick Flood/Flood Design**

Press **Blake Zidell & Associates**

Program Editor **Susan R. Case**

Program Design **Bart Solenthaler/Bart&Co.**

Student Production Intern **Kelsey Gagen**

Student Marketing Assistants **Dana De Castro, Eliza Dumas**

College of the Arts

Dean **Daniel Gurskis**

Associate Dean **Ronald L. Sharps**

Assistant Dean **Linda D. Davidson**

Director of Administration **Marie Sparks**

College Administrator **Zacrah S. Battle**

Art and Design **Livia Alexander**

John J. Cali School of Music **Jon Robert Cart**

School of Communication and Media **Keith Strudler**

Theatre and Dance **Randy Mogleston**

Broadcast and Media Operations **Patricia Piroh**

University Art Galleries **Darren Lee Miller**

Production Staff

Coordinator of Acting **Heather Benton**

Production Manager **Peter J. Davis**

Production Associate **Cyndi Kumor**

Production Office Assistant **Nicholas Zaccario**

Literary Manager **Andi Stover**

Scenic Supervisor **Erhard Rom, Shoko Kambara**

Technical Director **Ben Merrick**

Assistant Technical Director **Daniel Graham**

Draftsman/Master Carpenter **Nick Skiba**

Scenic Charge **Olivia Joyce**

Props Supervisor **Alison Merrick**

Costume Supervisor **Debra Otte**

Costume Shop Supervisor **Judith Evans**

Assistant Costume Shop Supervisor **Jeanette Aultz**

Drapers **Tilly Adams, Amanda Phillips-Balingit, Katie Pippin**

Wardrobe Mentor **Pamela Snyder-Gallagher**

Lighting Supervisor **Cecilia Durbin**

Production Master Electricians **Elaine Wong, Daniel Huston**

Sound Supervisor **Scott O'Brien**

Stage Management Supervisor **Mysti Stay**

Staff for *Wedding Band*

Assistant Directors **Jeff Lambert Wingfield, Joe Fernandez**

Dance Captain **Ciara Allen**

Fight Captains **Michele Correggio, Adriana Guerrero**

Technical Director **Matthew Gallo**

Assistant Set Designer **Madison Sawula**

Assistant Costume Designer **Joseph Anello**

Assistant Lighting Designer **Daniel Mackle**

Assistant Stage Managers **Michele Correggio, Lauren Winston**

Master Electrician **Chris Ferranti**

Assistant Master Electrician **Michaela Pietrinferno**

Props Master **Louis Medrano**

Props Crew Head **Ashley Waldron**

Scenic Charge **Lauren Carroll**

Light Board Operator **Anthony Borsellino**

Sound A1 **Prince Bawuah**

Wardrobe Head **Becca Sauer**

Production Run Crew **Annie Castoro, Christian Confalone, Kaylah Nash,
Marisa Papa**

Wardrobe Crew **Alexander Carr, Jenna Harzold**

Programs in this season are made possible in part by funds from:

The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts



Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation



FACE Contemporary Theater, a program developed by FACE Foundation and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States



Peak Patrons: Anonymous, Julie Cerf, Yong Chang, Alison and James T. Cirenza, Joanna Conrad, Caroline Cronson, Kara Cross, Alyce Dissette, Martin Wechsler & David Fanger, Nancy Fullerton, Elisabeth Gitelle, Julie Harris, Pamela Markham Heller, Garrison Keillor, Gerald Langlois, Jackie Pagano, Michael Peroff, Susan Satz

To view our complete season and for more information, visit peakperfs.org.

Find us on 

 @peakperfs

 @peakperfs